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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA POLITICAL NEWSLETTER JULY 26-AUGUST 1

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¶1. (SBU) This cable is our first weekly South Africa Political newsletter. It is written in partnership with Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau. The newsletter is open to contributions to highlight political trends. Contact Madeline Seidenstricker or Jonathan Smallridge for more information, or to make contributions. The newsletter also is available on the Political Section's blog, "A View from South Africa," found on intelink.gov.

Domestic News

Municipal Workers Strike

¶2. (SBU) Workers belonging to the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) and the Independent Municipal and Allied Workers Union (IMATU) began an indefinite strike on July 27 after wage negotiations broke down between the unions and the government. Striking workers have demanded a 15 percent increase while the government initially countered with an offer of 11.5 percent. The unions are considering a revised wage increase of 13 percent that might end the strike by the weekend. Strike action occurred in most major cities of the country, with municipal services affected. The Congress of South African Trade Unions has called for the government to up its wage offers so that the dispute can be resolved quickly. (Business Day, Jul 28)

Government Team to Investigate Service Delivery Protests

¶3. (SBU) The South African Government, in conjunction with recommendations made by the African National Congress (ANC) National Executive Committee (NEC), has established a task force to investigate the reasons for the recent service delivery protests. (Note: Service delivery protests have been ongoing in recent weeks as citizens claim the government has not done enough to address water, sanitation, and housing issues. See Reftels for more information. End Note.) The ANC has deployed Deputy Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba (the task force's leader), Minister of Justice Jeff Radebe, Minister of Police Nathi Mthethwa, and Mpumalanga provincial government officials to investigate protests in the Mpumalanga province. Once the team visits Mpumalanga, they will investigate incidents in Gauteng and North West Province. (Sowetan, Jul 28)

Government Ministers and Luxury Items

¶4. (SBU) Zuma's administration has spent 7.2 million USD on luxury items since assuming power in April. A number of Cabinet ministers have purchased new vehicles. Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga purchased a BMW and a Range Rover Sport TDV8 while Communications Minister Siphwe Nyanda purchased two new BMWs. The Democratic Alliance (DA) has written a letter to the Director

General of the Presidency Vusi Mavimbela and proposed that cost-cutting amendments be made to the ministerial handbook. The DA in the Western Cape has already implemented cost-cutting. (News 24, Jul 27)

Constitutional Court Changes Coming

15. (SBU) University of Western Cape professor, and legal scholar, Pierre de Vos says, "In the near future President Jacob Zuma will probably appoint Justice Sandile Ngcobo as our new Chief Justice." (Note: There is ongoing speculation over the next Chief Justice in South Africa. The Judicial Services Commission has yet to put forward a nomination. End Note.) Ngcobo is known as a sound legal scholar, who wrote an important judgment on declaring it unconstitutional for South African Airways to discriminate against a passenger on the basis of his HIV status. Ngcobo wrote, "In view of the prevailing prejudice against HIV positive people, any discrimination against them can, to my mind, be interpreted as a fresh instance of stigmatization and I consider this to be an assault on their dignity. The impact of discrimination on HIV positive people is devastating. It is even more so when it occurs in the context of employment. It denies them the right to earn a living. For this reason, they enjoy special protection in our law." (www.constitutionallyspeaking.co.za, July 23)

South Africa: President Zuma Appoints New National Police Commissioner

16. (SBU) The South African Press Agency (SAPA) reports that South African President Jacob Zuma has appointed KwaZulu-Natal MEC Bheki Cele as the new National Commissioner of Police on 29 July. Cele replaces Jackie Selebi, who has been on special leave since 2008 pending his court case on alleged corrupt activities and defeating the ends of justice. Selebi's contract expires on 31 July while Cele is due to step into his shoes in August. (Contributed by the

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Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau) [SAPA: Cooperative, nonprofit national news agency, South African Press Association (SAPA); URL: <http://www.sapa.org.za>]

Opposition Raises Concern on 'Zulufication' of RSA Security Cluster

17. (SBU) SAPA reports that the appointment of Bheki Cele's 29 July appointment as South Africa's new police chief has added the number of KwaZulu-Natal men who lead South Africa's security cluster to four. Cele joins Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa, Intelligence Minister Dr Siyabonga Cwele and Justice Minister Jeff Radebe, who were appointed after the April general elections. Political analyst Kiru Naidu said while Cele brings "considerable political experience," he will allegedly face major challenges in restoring confidence in the police service. Meanwhile, Durban Congress of the People (COPE) spokesman Siyanda Mhlongo described the allocation of security, intelligence organs and judiciary positions to KwaZulu-Natal ANC leaders as the "Zulufication" of the said organs. Mhlongo questioned Cele's skills to tackle corruption, racketeering and money laundering when he claimed Cele had been living "beyond his means" since his 2002 appointment, and that "eThekweni leaders of the ruling party have been 'parasiting' on state resources." (Contributed by the Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau) [SAPA: Cooperative, nonprofit national news agency, South African Press Association; URL: <http://www.sapa.org.za>]

"Tense Relationship" Between ANC's Mantashe, Youth League

18. (U) The Sunday Independent reports that the ANC and its allies face succession questions. Some ANC Youth League leaders reportedly want to replace the ANC Secretary-General, Gwede Mantashe, at the ANC's centenary conference in 2012 with Fikile Mbalula, a former youth league leader and the current police deputy minister, while a debate on the future of the South African Communist Party (SACP) leader Blade Nzimande is "raging" within the organization. The "tense relationship" has led to the league reportedly opposing ANC leaders "at almost every turn." The league criticized Mantashe's 27

July dismissal of the current service delivery protests as "merely infighting and not genuine service delivery protests" as well as the secretary-general's dismissal of ANC Youth League President Julius Malema's proposal to nationalize mines. Meanwhile, the Congress of South African Trade Unions is reportedly also facing its own succession questions at its upcoming congress but that "early indications" are that General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi and other officials could return for another term. (Contributed by the Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau) [Sunday Independent: Weekly newspaper, self-described as "serving the leaders and opinion-makers who are forging an inclusive democratic society," privately owned by Independent Newspaper Company]

External Affairs

New Diplomatic Deployments

¶9. (SBU) Although not confirmed, insiders of the deployment committee of the African National Congress (ANC) have said former Social Development Minister Zola Skweyiya and former Arts and Culture Minister Pallo Jordan are set to be appointed as South African High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and South African Ambassador to the United Nations respectively. Prominent political analyst Xolela Mangcu told Poloff on July 28 that Jordan would bring his "African nationalism stance to the United Nations, but that he would be easier to work with than previous diplomats who hold anti-Western stances." (The Times, Jul 18)

International Criminal Court Warrant for Sudanese President

¶10. (SBU) Multilateralism Deputy Director General George Nene of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DICO) says legal experts are examining whether the African Union's decision to not execute the International Criminal Court's warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir conflicts with South Africa's ratification of the Rome statute. On July 31, the South African Government announced it was "obliged to arrest al-Bashir if he visits." (DICO Briefing, Jul 22; South African Press Association (SAPA); URL: <http://www.sapa.org.za>)

Developments on Zimbabwe

¶11. (SBU) President Jacob Zuma said on Tuesday that intervention measures would be taken within the South African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) should there be any indication the provisions of democracy inside Zimbabwe are compromised. Meanwhile, the DA has asked President Zuma to release a report made by retired military generals sent to Zimbabwe during the country's elections. (Note: Zuma has said the report was made

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orally and no written report exists. End Note.) Additionally, the Media Committee of the African Group of Ambassadors, which is chaired by Zimbabwe and co-chaired by Congo (Kinshasa), has criticized the South African media over the negative coverage of issues especially in Zimbabwe and Congo. The committee is chaired by Zimbabwean ambassador to South Africa, Simon Khaya Moyo. (News 24 & Chronicle Reporter, Jul 29.)

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